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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
MAINE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE MANUAL  
Introduction

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On October 1, 1996, the Department of Human Services submitted a State Plan to the Secretary of Health and Human Services to eliminate and replace its Aid for Families with Dependent Children Program with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) as authorized by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. The Department will refer to its financial assistance programs as the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and Parents as Scholars (PaS) programs. These programs provide assistance to families while parents prepare for, accept, and retain employment which supports them. The job preparation program is referred to as ASPIRE-TANF.

Federal and State statutes provide the authority for TANF and PaS. Maine statutes place the responsibility for administering these programs with the Maine Department of Human Services. Within the Department, the program is administered by the Bureau of Family Independence (BFI).

The TANF and PaS programs are administered in a manner consistent with the objectives of the programs and respect the rights, privacy and personal dignity of the individual under the United States Constitution, the Social Security Act and the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

1. The TANF Program is a financial assistance program for needy families with dependent children who are deprived of parental support or care because of the death, continued absence, incapacity of a parent, or the under employment of a parent who is the principal wage earner.
2. The PaS Program is a state funded student financial aid program based on need limited to 2000 parents who have dependent children deprived of parental support or care because of the death, continued absence, incapacity of a parent, or the under employment of a parent who is the principal wage earner. (Chapter X).

Families who are otherwise eligible for the TANF program who seek one-time, short-term assistance to obtain or retain employment may elect Alternative Aid Assistance instead of TANF. (Chapter IX).

In addition to the basic TANF and PaS programs and the one-time, short-term Alternative Aid Assistance program, the Department administers a limited program of Emergency Assistance (EA). (Chapter VIII).

Furthermore, the Department administers a Non-TANF Federal Funded Refugee Cash Assistance Program of up to eight (8) months of assistance. The determination of financial eligibility is modeled after the TANF Program. Eligibility criteria specific to RCA is described in chapter VII.

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All individuals have the right to apply for any assistance without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, gender orientation, religion, or handicap.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, no qualified individual with a disability will, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation or be denied the benefits of the services, programs or activities of the Maine Department of Human Services, or be subjected to discrimination by the Maine Department of Human Services.

Additionally, applicants and recipients are assured confidentiality, equitable and courteous treatment and may appeal decisions and have fair hearings should they disagree with any action taken affecting their benefit.

Furthermore, the Department will provide interpreters at no cost to non-English speaking individuals applying for or participating in Department Programs.

Assistance will not be given to a family that includes an adult who has received assistance for 60 or more months, whether or not consecutive, under any program funded with Federal Funds which are part of the TANF Block Grant. In determining the number of months for which an individual who is a parent or pregnant has received assistance under a program funded under the TANF Block Grant, the Department will disregard any month for which assistance was provided with respect to the individual and during which the individual was: 1) a minor child and not the head of a household or married to the head of a household, 2) an adult who lived in Indian country during a month when at least 50% of the adults living on the reservation were unemployed, or 3) in a family receiving the enhanced earned income disregard. Extension of benefits beyond 60 months is explained in Chapter I, Time Limit.

The State-funded PaS Program will not be subject to the 60 month time limit.

An application for the TANF, PaS, RCA or Alternative Aid program is considered an application for medical assistance. Eligibility for Medicaid is determined separately.

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Overview of the Manual:

This manual contains policy covering the eligibility requirements for the TANF, PaS, RCA Emergency Assistance and Alternative Aid Assistance programs, Transitional child care, and Transitional Transportation..

TANF is the basic program. Chapters I through VI describe the basic program, eligibility criteria, the budgeting process, payment process, administrative hearings processes, and transitional services.

Chapter VII contains the specific rules for the Refugee Cash Assistance Program and for TANF Non-citizens.

Chapters VIII through X describe the Emergency Assistance, Alternative Aid Assistance and Parents for Scholars programs and the eligibility criteria specific to those special programs.

The Appendix contains charts referred to throughout the manual.